

ZAYTUN DIVISION SETS STANDARD

**Story and photos by:
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The evening sun wanes on the horizon as Zaytun soldiers keep a vigilant watch over their camp in Irbil, Iraq.

On the anniversary of its second year as a Coalition partner, MND-NE "Zaytun" Division is gathering much attention from the Coalition Forces for its successful civil-military operations in northern Iraq.

Zaytun Division was founded on September 2004, after flying 8,400km from Korea to Kuwait and then 1,115km on ground across Iraq. The first mission for the division was to restore security in the region.

After hard work and a dedicated effort, terrorist threats in the region were largely extinguished by November 2004, and Zaytun's work for peace and reconstruction of the region could finally be set in

motion. To grow a sufficient security force in the region, the division rebuilt destroyed buildings and

provided the Iraqi Security Forces with the necessary tools and training.

With a \$33.5 million CERP budget spent in the region, they achieved many improvements in the quality of life for the people by starting a Saemaoul (New Village) Movement that emphasizes hard work, self-recovery and cooperation.

Zaytun founded the Vocational Training Center (VTC) that, in addition to

its main goal of spreading advanced technologies in the region, is achieving great results in giving the region's female population a chance for economic advancement, and in reducing possible social unrests.



Local patients are pleased with wheelchairs donated by Zaytun Hospital.



From its opening in February 2005, 917 people have received education at the VTC, among them seven women who became first Kurdish females to be certified for driving special vehicles. All VTC graduates are now active players in recovery works in the region.

To combat a 70% illiteracy rate in the Irbil area, Zaytun opened a Kurdish Language course through which 2,260 women and children learned how to write and read their own language. Schools and clinics have also been built for socially underprivileged people in 25 villages around the region.

Another part of MND-NE's CMO work is the Zaytun Hospital, which recently welcomed its 40,000th local patient for treatment, in an area where medical treatment is hard to find.

Zaytun's work, is implanting the will for self-recovery among the locals rather than simply providing help, with the emphasis on "Respect and Consideration" to the Kurdish culture and custom. As a result, Zaytun, which means olive in Arabic, has been recognized as the locals' friend rather than an occupying force.

Remarks from the region's political leaders attest to Zaytun's success. President Massoud Barzani of the (Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) said that while the old Kurdish saying says that the Kurdish people have no friends other than the mountains, now they have a new true friend named Zaytun. Prime Minister Nechervan Barzani said that Zaytun has become a true member of this largely Kurdish, Assyrian, and Arab

society, and that he hopes for more active economic investment in the region by Korean companies.

"The military as a whole has always been a symbol of homicide and demolition for the Kurdish people, but (the) Korean army was not. They have conducted peace and reconstruction operations devotedly with respects our culture and tradition," said Fawzia Husean Aziz, the principal of Hasarok Elementary School in Irbil.

With a continuing stream of visitors from other coalition members to benchmark Zaytun Division's Civil-Military Operation, Zaytun Division was given a chance to showcase its success at the Senior Leader Conference held at MNF-I Headquarters in Baghdad on July 15. In a first ever divisional presentation to the

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Zaytun soldiers celebrate their arrival at Camp Zaytun in Irbil, Iraq, after 1,115 km drive from Kuwait. (Left) A Zaytun soldier keeps strict watch with sharp eyes at a VCC guard post.



(Left) Major Gen. Joong-seon Hwang, Commander of Zaytun Division, has a conversation with a local child in children's language. (Below) Local children are following the Korean traditional Lion-mask during the multi-functional Green Angel Operation.

Senior Leader Conference, Republic of Korea Army Lieutenant Colonel Shim Dong-hyun, the Zaytun CMO Staff, gave a briefing titled "Camp Zaytun—Coalition Success Story," followed by a fifteen minute video presentation titled "Operation for Iraqi Future" produced by Zaytun Public Affairs Office. The conference was attended by representatives from 29 coalition members, six NATO countries, and United Nation Security Forces.

The briefing and the video presentation received a standing ovation from deeply moved attendees,



A Korean officer teaches shooting skills to local security officials in MiTT education run by Zaytun Division.

who commented that Zaytun Division's civil-military operation effort could be "the best example" for other coalition countries.

Iraqi Army Major General Khudaier, the Commander of Iraq Ground Forces Command, said he was deeply moved to tears by the video. "On behalf of all Iraqi people, I would like to thank Zaytun Division," he said. "Zaytun's sensitive approach to the locals is the most desirable method in engaging Iraqis."

A Dutch senior attendee said "I am very impressed on the activities of Zaytun Division. They have accomplished really heroic results by making practical changes, not simply participating in the Coalition.

As proud representatives of Korea, the troops of MND-NE will continue to serve the country until their mission of bringing "Peace and Reconstruction" to Iraq is accomplished.